

FirstNet needs law-enforcement experts, Kennedy says

Urgent Communications By Jill Nolin

May 22, 2014

ATLANTA—We want you.

That was part of [FirstNet](#) Deputy General Manager TJ Kennedy's message to those attending the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Law Enforcement Information Management (LEIM) conference, which will conclude today in Atlanta.

FirstNet is looking for law-enforcement professionals with technology backgrounds to help it build out a nationwide public-safety broadband network, according to Kennedy, who has been the staff member leading FirstNet since [Bill D'Agostino resigned as general manager in April](#).

Kennedy described the FirstNet—a young organization that only began assembling a staff a year ago—as a “startup.” FirstNet has made several significant hires in the last few weeks (one being the [appointment of Ali Afrashteh as chief technology officer](#)), and FirstNet will continue to hire staff during the coming weeks, he said.

Four new positions were posted last week for subject-matter experts (SMEs) in law enforcement, firefighting, EMS and 911 that will work out of the agency's headquarters in Reston, Va.

“Those are key positions that hopefully some of you in this room will be applying for ... and if you're not, I would hope that you would want to recruit the best and the brightest to be our law-enforcement SME,” Kennedy said Tuesday during a session on the future of law-enforcement communications. “We're looking for law-enforcement experts with a technology background, especially operational, to join our team.”

Additionally, 10 regional outreach positions will come on board in the coming weeks, as FirstNet

assembles its outreach and state-consultation team, he said. These new hires will join the existing 55 full-time employees and 30 contractors, Kennedy said.

“We have a lot of interviews taking place to build that organization and to get our full team in place,” he said. “I’m amazed every two weeks, when we bring on a few more people, how much more work we can get done—and that’s an important piece.”

Kennedy also reassured attendees that land-mobile radio would continue to play a vital role in public safety.

“To me, the thing that is most important is that we’re (providing) the tools and equipment that public safety needs to do their job more safely, more effectively and even more efficiently,” Kennedy said. “It does not mean ... that we don’t need land-mobile radio. Land-mobile radio is a very critical part of what we use in public safety today and what we’ll continue to use in public safety.

“Having a public-safety broadband system that is built for public safety is also a great adjunct to that and will be very, very important,” he added.

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